

The Privilege of Believers.

BEING THE
SUBSTANCE
 OF A
DISCOURSE

Delivered at

*Grogun in the County of Antrim
 in Ireland.*

In the Year 1754:

By *JOHN CENNICK.*

*Now in Christ Jesus, ye who were some time afar off are
 brought nigh by the Blood of Christ. Ephes. ii. 13.*

*It shall come to pass in the Place where it was said, ye
 are not my People, there shall they be called the Chil-
 dren of the Living God. Rom. ix. 26.*

*I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my Sons and
 Daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. 2 Cor. vi. 18.*

D U B L I N :

Printed by S. POWELL, for the AUTHOR.

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The Principles of Belief

BEING THE

SUBSTANCE

OF A

COURSE

Delivered at

St. John's Church, London



In the year 1774

BY JOHN CANNICK

in Church, London, to which were sent some of the
most valuable and curious of the British Museum.
The first volume of the series of Church, London, 1774.
The second volume of the series of Church, London, 1774.
The third volume of the series of Church, London, 1774.
The fourth volume of the series of Church, London, 1774.
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D U E L I N G

by S. Powell, for the Author.

LONDON.



THE

Privilege of Believers.

JOHN i. 12.

As many as received him to them gave he Power to become Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name.



WHEN the due Time was come, in which the *God of Israel* would be *Immanuel* and tabernacle with Men, he came according to the many Prophecies to *his own People*, the Family of *Abraham*, to whom and to their Fathers he had been promised upwards of two thousand Years; and for whose coming all the Tribes had waited with great Impatience and Earnestness from the Time of the Departure of the Sceptre from *Judah*, which happened not long before his Appearance in the Flesh; but whether his mean Form, his low

Birth and Estate in the World, or their being disappointed in their carnal Expectation of his restoring the Kingdom to *Israel*, was the Reason, or both together, it is certain *his own People received him not*. They were offended at him, and scorned to acknowledge him for *the Messiah*.

His whole Doctrine and manner of Preaching was rejected by the far greater Part of the *Jews*, who always had him in Derision, and especially when he said he was the I AM, they openly blasphemed and rebelled against him. Thus *they forsook the Rock that made them*, and hid their Faces from that *Jehovah* whom their Fathers *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob* saw, and who was worshipped by them and their Children thro' many Generations, and *who was not ashamed to be called their God*.

Some however, even of this sinful and adulterous People, waited for the Day of his coming, and they like *Abraham* saw it and were glad.

Among these were *Zacharias and Elizabeth*, the Virgin *Mary*, *Simeon*, *Joseph of Arimathea*, and *Anna* the Prophetess. They knew when *Augustus Caesar* laid the Tax upon the *Jews*, as well as others, *the Sceptre was certainly gone from Judah, and a Lawgiver from between his Feet*, and believed the *Shiloh* must be come; and as they were led by the *Holy Spirit* to look for him, his extream Poverty, Meanness, and despicable Appearance in the World did not stumble them. They believed on him, blessed God that their Eyes had seen his Salvation, and spake of him to all that looked for Redemption in *Israel*, to these, as well as to that *happy Few*, who in those times received him, and all who have since believed on his Name, he has granted *the Privilege or Power of becoming Sons of God*, while all who receive him not, miss this great Blessing, and suffer Loss eternally.

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From the Days of God's being first *manifested in the Flesh* to this Time, he is preached in the World, and now as well as formerly many receive him not. Some stand aloof, and hear concerning his Redemption, but are in no immediate Want, and let him go unconcernedly. He knocks indeed at the Door of their Hearts, but they are like the *Inns in Bethlehem*, there is no room for him there; the Pleasures of this Life, the Deceits of Honours, Friends and Riches supply his Place, and they receive him not. Others like the proud *Children of Israel*, scorn to submit to him, and with *Jewish* Haughtiness despise his Godhead, and wantonly and presumptuously, like the *Gentile and Heathen Nations* are resolved *not to have this Man to reign over them*, or to acknowledge for their Lord, a Man who suffered Death upon a Cross between two Thieves.

But yet there are some who still receive *Jesus* with open and glad Hearts, and who inherit the Adoption of Sons, and are numbered with his Friends, and counted to the Lord for a Generation. These in general are the *Poor in Spirit*, Souls who were ready to perish, lost Sheep, miserable and unhappy Persons, and such as were self-spoiled and ruined, together with such as had sincerely sought after Righteousness, by Works under the Law, and who weary and almost in Despair at finding they failed, were ready to conclude themselves without Hope; these when *Christ* has been preached to them, or when the *Holy Ghost* has glorified the *Loving Saviour* in their Sight, like *Zaccheus* have gladly received him, and so commenced his Children, his Sons and Daughters.

To receive *Christ*, implies, not only a Concession to the Doctrine of the *Creed*, or assenting to the Truth and Validity of the *Scriptures*, or the acknowledging him to be the Lord, the *Messiah* and *Christ*, that should

come into the World, and so choosing to be called by his Name, and blame *Jews* and *Deists* who are of another Mind, but to receive him is, to accept of him, as he is offered and preached in the Scriptures, as our *Lord God*, our *only Saviour*, our *Righteousness*, *Wisdom*, *Holiness* and *Redemption*. It is a closing in with him in his New-Testament; he becomes a *Father* to us, and we become *his Children*; he is *our God*, and we are *his People*; our *Shepherd*, and we are *his Sheep*; our *Husband*, and we are *his Rb*, *his Sister*, *his Spouse* and *Wife*; yea, it is receiving of him into our Hearts, by *his Spirit*, we let in him *that stands at the Door and knocks*, and he sups with us, gives us a Foretaste and Pledge of the Marriage-Feast, the Earnest that we shall Sup with him there for ever. This cannot be learnt in Theory. It is no Matter for the Sensual and Natural Man, he cannot understand it. In this Matter, no worldly Wisdom helps or avails, no large Capacity, no Depth of Thought is of use, but *an honest Heart*, who Day and Night thirsts for Salvation, and gasps after *Jesus*, as a Hart for the Water, and *as a dry Land* for refreshing Rain, and who learns it of the *Holy Ghost* within. There he brings the News, and makes them to understand this *Wisdom* secretly. He speaks in the soft still Voice, *Open thy Heart, Open the Everlasting Doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Open my Love, my Dove, and I will come in*, *Jesus* says, and where he is manifested, there is *his Reward* with him; *his Father* also comes and makes his Abode there, and the Chaste and now washed Temple of the Body becomes *the House of God*.

The receiving Christ is a thing wholly for the Heart, and is known only by Experience. It is the common Privilege of all the Faithful, every Believer in *Jesus* knows this precious Benefit of having received

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the Lord, and whoever does not know he hath found the Saviour, he is no true Christian. As many as believe in his Name have him in them. He dwells with them, he is their new and eternal Life as it is written, He that hath the Son hath Life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not Life. St. Paul says, Now the Life which I live in the Flesh is the Life of the Son of God. It is not I that live, it is Christ that liveth in me. When one of the Martyrs was advised, to have God before his Eyes, when he was near his Execution, he answered chearfully, I have him in my Heart. This is what I mean, and what the Holy Ghost means in the Text, for such and such only are of his Family who receive him. Others, whether they are Professors or Prophane, live without Christ in the World.

Our Saviour never intended when he was taken up bodily into Heaven, to leave his Disciples Orphans, and desolate upon Earth, he promised certainly to be with them and in them, and not only would so appear to them, who were then his Followers, and let them see and enjoy him, that they should find he had not left them comfortless, but he made the same Promise to their Generations and Children then unborn, when he said, if any Man love me, I will come to him, and manifest myself to him; I will bring my Father, and we will come and make our Abode with him. Again, Behold I stand at the Door and knock, if any Man hear my Voice and open the Door, I will come into him, &c.

All who believe on him find his Words true and faithful, they are his Witnesses, that he has fulfilled his Promise, and happily experience that he is come with Salvation to them, and the high and lofty One who inhabits Eternity, and who dwells in the high and holy Place, vouchsafes to dwell with them.

But the Receivers of *Christ*, or such as believe in him, are not only thus honoured, they not only receive *the Lamb of God* into their Houses, *the King of Saints*, *the God of Heaven and Earth* does not only condescend to make their Bodies his Temple, but they receive with him Remission of Sins, Deliverance from Hell, Death and the Law, beside *they have Power to become Sons of God*, or the Privilege to call *the Father of Jesus, our Father*, and he is pleased to adopt them for Children, and to call them *my Sons and Daughters*. This is that Doctrine so often repeated, even in the Old Testament Times, as well as by the Apostles of *our Saviour*, and by *our Lord* himself.

In the New-Testament Writings, *Servants of God* are clearly distinguished from *Sons*, for indeed there is a great Difference between them. *A Son, or Child of God* may be a *Servant*, he may over and above his Sonship be employed in *the Redeemer's Work*, and labour in his Vineyard, as the Apostles and other Ministers of *Christ* have done; but their Hope was not that they had been *Servants*, or prosper'd in the Work of their Master, nor did their Safety consist therein, but in being made *Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus*. When the Disciples once returned from their Labour of Preaching and Working of Miracles, &c. in the Name of their Master, they told him with a Sort of Joy how well they had succeeded, and how even *Satan* was subject to their Word, but *Jesus* answered them, *Notwithstanding rejoice not in this, but rather rejoice that your Names are written in Heaven*; and at another time he told them, *I have not called you Servants, but Friends*. Again, a *Servant* abideth not in the House alway, but a *Son* abideth alway; so when he sent *Magdalene* to tell them he was risen, he says, *go tell my*

my Brethren, that I go to my Father and to your Father, &c. He had often done after this Manner in the Days of his Flesh, he taught them in their Prayers, to call *God their Father*; when ye pray, say *Our Father, &c.* Again, *fear not little Flock, it is your Father's good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom.* Again, *your Heavenly Father will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him.* This is what *David, Isaiah, Ezekiel* and *Jeremiah* had foreseen so long ago, when they said, *Thou shalt call me my Father.* And that Name was known among the Prophets some hundreds of Years before the New-Testament was of Force, and they taught the People how *the Redeemer* would bring the Souls strayed afar off, and such who had forfeited their Right to the Kingdom, into the nearest Fellowship, and Kindred with *God*, that he would be *their Father*, and vouchsafe to call them *my Children.* This is now come to pass, and effected thro' the Death and Blood-shedding of *the Lamb.* We, who were afar off by wicked Works, and who could not have claimed the Benefits of the Family of *Abraham*, for he was not our Father, and *Israel* acknowledged us not as Children, are now adopted by Faith into *the Family and Household of God.* We are *Sons* and have received the *Power to call God Father, we have received the Spirit of Adoption whereby we cry Abba Father.* This is *the glorious Liberty of the Children of God*, and is the highest and most desirable Privilege that can be attained.

It was formerly the Name and Character of the Saints, and they were called so of the *Lord, Servants of God, they served the Lord in their Generation,* but it is not used so much in the Gospel, because *Jesus* who was *Lord of All, and the only begotten Son of God,* has taken *the Servants Place,* and done all the Work worthy to be mentioned, and by Way of Eminence,

nence; is called of *God, my Righteous Servant*. All our Services are nothing in Comparison with his; and not worthy to be named. He has made Peace, he has bruised the *Serpent's* Head, he has sweat Blood, and opened a Fountain for Sin; he has undergone the Chastisement of his People, obtained their Pardon, and wrought out with Cries and Tears a perfect Righteousness, and made, in offering up his Body on the Tree, a full, compleat and sufficient Attonement for Sin, disannulled the old Covenant, abolished Death, removed the Curse, and carried away the Iniquity of us all. He is only worthy of the Name *Servant of God*, and deserves and merits above all to be accepted for his Works sake, by which we are made Righteous and justified.

But here it must be observed, how superficial their *Christianity* is, who imagine they are in a safe Estate, and in a fair Way of going to Heaven, because they do good Works, as they say, and *serve God*. Such must be told, *if you go no farther ye are not safe, you are yet under the Law, and have no Hope but the Hope of a Jew, and one who expects his Works and Duties will intitle him to the Favour of Almighty God, and bring him to the Reward of Eternal Life*. O let the Ministers of our Saviour endeavour to undeceive such People, let them make their Righteousness appear, as it is, a Cob-web, a Garment of Fig-leaves and filthy Rags, and *make mention of Christ's Righteousness and his only*.

Are any so shallow and thoughtless in religious Matters, as to imagine their Alms will purchase Heaven, their Tears wash out Sin, their imperfect and slight Obedience be accepted, and get the Kingdom for a Reward? O No! You who think so, trample upon the *Blood of Jesus*, and slight the great Price he paid for your Ransom. Nothing less than
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the Blood, the precious Heart's-Blood of *God's only Son*, his many Thousands of Tears, and his Sweat in the Garden, can wash out Sin, and quench the Divine Wrath. No Price less than himself ransomed us out of *Satan's Bands*, his whole Life's Obedience, his sore Afflictions, his Faithfulness in his Temptations, his painful Death and his Anguish and Torments, bought Heaven for us, and his many Years of Sufferings alone made Satisfaction, and recovered us out of our Enemy's Hands. Be ashamed, and blush then, ye who have boasted of what ye have done ; be greatly ashamed that ye have done no more to his Honour, and so much to grieve him. Think what Sin have you obliterated and cancelled ? What Iniquity have you purged away with all your Doings ? Put all you have done together, and all the Works and Merits of Men and Angels, and it would not avail you, if you receive not *Christ* into your Hearts, ye are only *Servants*, and for the least of your Disobedience you may be sent in strict Justice to Hell after all.

Herein then a *Servant* is different from a *Son of God*. A Man may have lived a strict Life, done much Good, and observed the Law, been zealous, a Promoter of Piety ; he may have prayed often and long, given away much to the Poor, and did all in his Power to please and serve *God*, but then if he has no more, he is not a *Christian* ; a *Turk*, a *Jew*, a *Heathen* may go thus far. And St. Paul and *Cornelius* did all this when they were without *our Saviour*, and *aliens to the Common-Wealth of Israel*, and needed Conversion to make them safe. All the Promises in the Law were temporal, and the Rewards preached to such as lived strictly under the Covenant of Works were entirely such as related to this Life, but *God* never promised to make Men *his Children* on any Account but thro' *Faith*, that the Divine Favour might

might be of *Free-Grace*, unmerited and undeserved Love. If a Man should serve his Master quite faithfully, do all that he was commanded, and not wrong him in any thing, not squander away nor embezzle his Goods, but be trusty to the last Degree; work Day and Night, and fail in no Respect of his Service, could he therefore expect his Master would make him his Son, and adopt him his Heir to all he had? Or could he think he had merited so much? Would not his Wages and full Hire be his just Reward? In like Manner, *Jefus* says, *When ye have done all that is commanded, say we are unprofitable Servants, we have done no more than our Duty.* I wish only all who argue and dispute so much for their Works could say, they had done all that was commanded them; but even then it would be Presumption to suppose they had a Right to Heaven, and to be of *the Lord's Family*. All who serve God, shall meet with their due Reward, but as it was never promised, so they cannot enter the Kingdom by their Works, nor stay in the House of God alway, but as *Hagar* and *Ismael* were turned out of *Abraham's* House, as *Bond Servants*, so shall all who proudly have thought by their Merits to get Salvation. They are *Servants* and not *Sons*. *Satan* and all wicked Men are more or less *Servants of God*. When God bid *the Destroying Angel* kill the *First-Born* in every Family in *Egypt*, but touch not one where the Blood was on the Door-posts, he obeyed strictly. When he gave *Satan* Leave to afflict *Job*, and touch all he had, only not to hurt his Life, he was punctual, and went no farther than his Commission; so it was in the Matter of deceiving the Prophets of *Ahab*, but it was an Obedience of Dread and Fear, it was servile and not filial, so is the Obedience of three Parts of the World, they are over-awed by the Fears of Death, the Terrors of the Law, and the looking for Judgment, the Dread

Dread of Hell, and the Wrath of God, makes them in some Measure obedient, and restrains them from Sinning ; but all this is nothing. Their Service is like the Service of *Satan*, it is done out of Fear and of Constraint, it is not *the Obedience of Sons*, and from *the Faith that works by Love*. They may carry it as far as they will, and go on till the last Day with their striving and working, and plead it at the Judgment when they have done, and say, *Lord, we have been called by thy Name, we have eaten and drank in thy Presence, we have cast out Devils, and done many wonderful Works in thy Name, and yet if they have gone no farther, Jesus will answer them, depart from me, I never knew ye.*

It is much otherwise with *true Believers* ; to them is the Power given to be of near Kin to *the King of Kings* ; they have *the Privilege to be Sons of God*. This Honour and unspeakable Happiness is given to those who receive *Jesus* in the World. This is conferred upon all freely, and only for *Jesus's Sake*, and is obtained by *all who believe in his Name*. God is so well pleased with *his Son's* Free-will Offering, so satisfied with his Death and Obedience, that for a Reward for his Sufferings, he has given him all Believers, who shall be *his Brethren, and Children of his Father*. God therefore so glorifies and honours *his crucified Child*, that whosoever in the World shall believe in him, shall by his Means be saved, and numbered with the Saints, and with *the Sons of God* in Glory everlasting. This serves to exalt *our Saviour* and his Merits, whereby is known how precious and dear his Sufferings are in the Sight of *the God-head*, since whoever rests thereon, and is thereon resolved to venture all for ever, is made for ever happy. The Obedience in which he trusts, the Blood in which he believes, and the Righteousness to which he looks, has deserved for him a greater Happiness

Happiness than to have been made *an Angel*, or *Lord of ten Worlds*. He has the *Privilege to become a Son of God*, to be a younger Brother to *Jesus Christ*, a near Relation to his *Creator and Saviour*.

This should be the Aim of all enquiring and seeking Souls, this should be *the Mark of the Prize of their High-Calling*. They are not invited by the Gospel merely to escape Hell, or to fly *the Wrath to come*, or to be made again *a little lower than the Angels*, to be crowned with *Glory and Worship*, nor even to be reckoned with the chiefest of *the Principalities*, or to be raised to be on a Level with the highest *Seraphims*, but to be *Children of our Lord God*, to be in the Family and Co heirs with *Christ Jesus*, to sit at his Table, to be *his Brethren and Sisters*, and *this Honour have all his Saints*.

Men who have received this Privilege and embraced this glorious Offer, tho' they are not brought into the Possession of so great Mercies, by Means of their Righteousness or Merits; and tho' they have not the least Dependance on their Works, nor would suffer that Thought which would so rob *Jesus* of his Honour, but are in a readiness to revenge every such Theft, and to lay all Glorifying in the Dust, and ascribe to his Praise all their Salvation; yet are constantly employed to his Glory, and out of Love to him live good Lives. His Words are too dear to them to be neglected, and his Commandments too precious to be despised or disesteemed. Out of the Bottom of their Hearts they are glad to serve *the Lord Christ*, and rejoice at every Opportunity of doing any Thing to please him, and this not out of Fear, not for Reward, not to make a Righteousness of it, or because they are not fully satisfied to depend wholly on *the Lamb*; but as I said, it is out of pure Love to *Jesus*, who has saved them, and brought them into *his Father's Household*. It is their Meat
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and Drink to do his Will, it is natural to them, and he who acts otherwise, be assured *he has not seen God, neither known him.*

A Servant of God, or one who has been brought up in the Church of *God*, and served under the Law, may for a Time do well, be very exact and careful, be inlightned from above, taste with Joy *the good Word of God*, and run as if he meant sincerely to be saved ; who after all perhaps rests there, or goes again back into a sinful Life, and brings a Blot upon all his Services, *all his Righteousness that he has done, shall not be mentioned to him, in the Sin that he has sinned, in that shall he die, saith the Lord God.* No State is therefore safe or secure, but the Estate of *the Children of God.* It is above all things necessary, that a sincere Person *make his Calling and Election sure ;* namely, that he is not content with having done much, or learnt, or understood, or comprehended much, but that he is sure *Jesus* is become *his Saviour*, and is now near to him, as *his Brother*, and as near as if *he had sucked the Breasts of his Mother ;* that *our Saviour's Father* is *his Father*, and that he will not be ashamed to confess him as such, when he comes the Latter-Day upon the Earth. Then he shall say to such, *Come ye blessed Children of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the Foundation of the World.* This Grace is attainable ; it is preached to all Mankind ; it is promised in all the Prophets, by our *Saviour*, and by all his Apostles and Evangelists, and may be entered by every upright Soul. A greater Favour cannot be. The Benefit is exceeding great, the Privilege inexpressible, but is surely granted to every Believer in *Christ Jesus*, and is part of the *Common-Wealth of Israel*, the Rights of the New-Testament, and what was the pure Aim and Intention of our *dear Lord and Master*, when he stooped

stooped to be *the Servant and Minister of All*, and when he paid our Debts, and died for us.

Since then all the Scriptures preach this, let none seem to come short of it. Let not *our Christianity* be only the Form, or without the happy Enjoyment of this Privilege, but let all look upon it as the *Free Gift of Grace*, and what belongs to them and their Children, and to all who believe in the Name of *Jesus*, so let them seek it, so ask it of *the Lord Christ*, whose Prerogative it is to bestow it, and they shall find, *that as many as receive Jesus, to them gives he Power to become Sons of God, even to as many as believe on his Name.*

Let the Spirit of Adoption only be given you, and all that is said of this Divine Matter by St. Paul to the *Galatians*, will be clear and plain, you will know by Experience what that means; *Thou art no more a Servant but a Son; we are not Children of the Bond-Woman, but of the Free, namely, of Jerusalem above, who is the Mother of us all. We are Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus. Because ye are Sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts, crying Abba Father.*

May that merciful and gracious Lord, of whom it is said, *Who shall declare his Generation?* make you of the Number of his Children, and of that Race, *who are born not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God.* These shall be reckoned to *the Son of Man* for a Generation, and be named after him. These shall help to fill up the innumerable Company of *Children, that shall be born to him, as Dew out of the Womb of the Morning.* May you my dear Brethren be found among them, and be intitled to this Grace, to your Souls Comfort in this Life, and to your eternal Joy hereafter. Amen!

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